

March 27, 2012

Dear Family Children and Senior Committee,

I am writing to you in regards to how not having Mental Health Parity has affected my family. Last week Wednesday as I was entering a training for my job as a Parent Support Partner I received a call from my sons school. The message I received was that my son was trying to kill himself. I rushed to the school where they had already did a risk assessment. Knowing that my son needed intensive mental health care I began to try to locate inpatient treatment without success. My only choice was to take him to the emergency room. He was placed on a 48 hour observation hold. My child was placed on waiting lists as far as South Bend Indiana. (Away from his family, caseworker and natural support within our Kent County community). Upon his discharge he was sent home where I monitored him on suicide watch for four days. The only other option at this time was to put him in Juvenile Detention. I frantically continued to call residential facilities for four days until I was able to find him a bed. With comprehensive treatment my son will return home with a case manager, a treatment plan and medications to meet my sons needs.

With Mental Health Parity my son would not have experienced a gap in professional treatment for his life-threatening crisis. I am asking you to support Mental Health Parity so that the mental health and physical health needs of my child may both be met. Please support Mental Health Parity in addition to supporting coverage for children with Autism by including a Mental Health Parity bill with SB 414, 415, and 981.

Sincerely,

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